

FLAMBEAU PARTY VISITS PARIS AND TOURS BATTLE-SCARRED FIELDS OF WORLD WAR

ALL MARVEL AT STRIKING WAR CANVAS

Huge Cyclorama Has Thousands of Individual Portraits—Graphic Panorama of Battle Area Aids Study of Conflict—Party Deeply Impressed by Endless Rows of Crosses. Poppies Still Blow in Flanders.

By VICTOR FLAMBEAU.

*"In Flanders fields the poppies blow
Between the crosses, row on row,
That mark our place; and in the sky
The larks, still bravely singing, fly"*

YES, it is all just the same there today. The poppies are still as red; the white crosses, row on row, mark the resting places of our boys, and overhead the larks soar and sing as though it all had never happened.

"The French fought for their country, the English for sport, and the Americans for souvenirs," that is the saying, so our guide told us.

But when you read, here and there, everywhere among the American crosses, "UNKNOWN SOLDIER," so many, many of them, then you realize how bravely "Our Boys" fought, how freely they gave their lives for country, for the world, and for civilization.

No visit to Europe is complete today without a trip to the battlefields, and the effort involved is well worth the time, so vital are the impressions gained.

The Flambeau party had arrived in Paris after a tour in southern Germany, where they had met with no mishap, and only kindly treatment from the German. They had passed through the customs, Austrian, German and French, with scarcely a dime's expense for duty, and only a charge of 200 marks for Bavarian visas, a half dollar American, though some tourists are charged 75 marks elsewhere in Germany.

So the Flambeau group came with no prejudice in their hearts, but only a keen interest in following the military movements of the American soldiers, and learning as much as possible of the story told by the battle-scarred fields of Europe. From Strasbourg on, where the party entered French territory, on either side of the train, here and there, were to be seen shattered buildings, shell holes now half obliterated by green foliage, small fields of wooden crosses, and always new houses, laborers engaged in building operations, bricklayers, plasterers and others at work. The country was green and productive, but there was a dearth of men, for France lost 1,500,000 killed and 700,000 wounded.

French Cars Lighter

"The French took our cars!" That is what the Germans retort, if you complain of their not having coaches enough for their passengers. The trains seem miles long, yet many stand in a passage way in German trains, so crowded are they, and that is somewhat true in France, though not so bad. The cars are much lighter weight than in America, so the small, puffing engine can draw more of them.

"Things will get better—if they don't get worse!" This is the ominous prediction of the German guide, with a shake of the head and a strange, sinister look. Yet the Germans are very friendly to Americans, and often a judicious tip will help wonderfully in getting compartments for a crowd.

The Flambeau bunch had been warned, however, by 'kind' friends at home, that the French would be very hostile, as they were supposed to dislike Americans. Nothing of the kind. Only the most cordial welcome awaited us, and our hotel was always a joy in its atmosphere and homelike feeling, besides being in a lovely spot along the Seine, somewhere opposite the Eiffel Tower—the Hotel du Palais, at 28 Cours Albert Ie. Go there if you are in Paris. It was where Senator Lodge had stayed, and Flambeau luckily carried a diplomatic letter with the Senator's powerful name, so they were doubly welcome.

The first excursion of the

Flambeau party was to the grave of the unknown French soldier, under the Arc de Triomphe, the most magnificent triumphal arch in the world, begun in 1806 by Napoleon I and completed under Louis Philippe, at a total cost of more than two millions of dollars. The soldier's tomb is in a solemn and beautiful spot, below the central arch of ninety feet in height, while the total height and breadth of the monument itself is each about 150 feet.

Fresh flowers, wreaths, bouquets, and emblems adorned the grave, for every French mother who at somewhere unknown a son may come here and bring her garland in the hope that the hero was a boy. Coming and going every moment were many visitors, who pass freely through under the arch, but vehicles are restrained by the chains at either side of the approach.

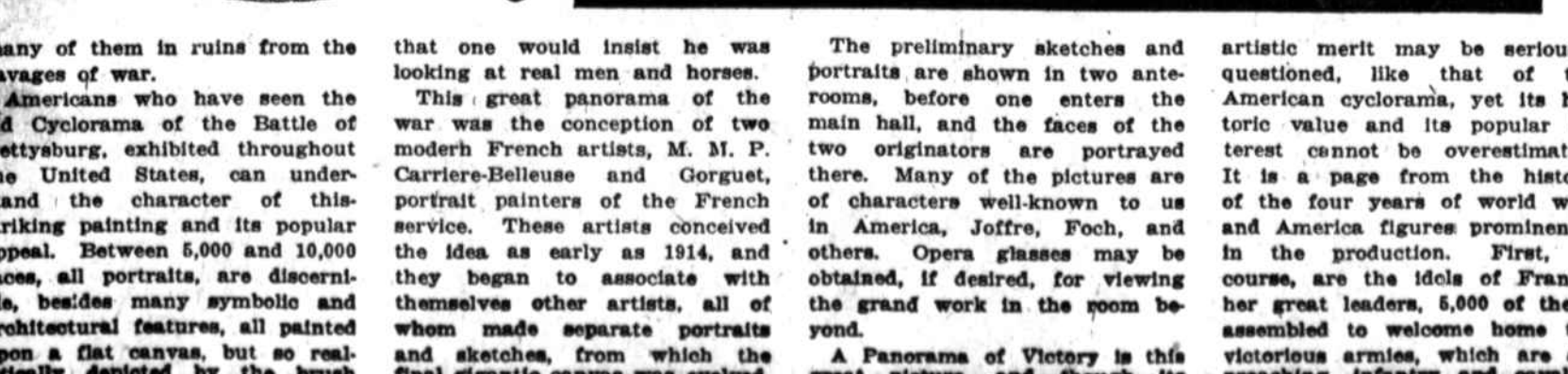
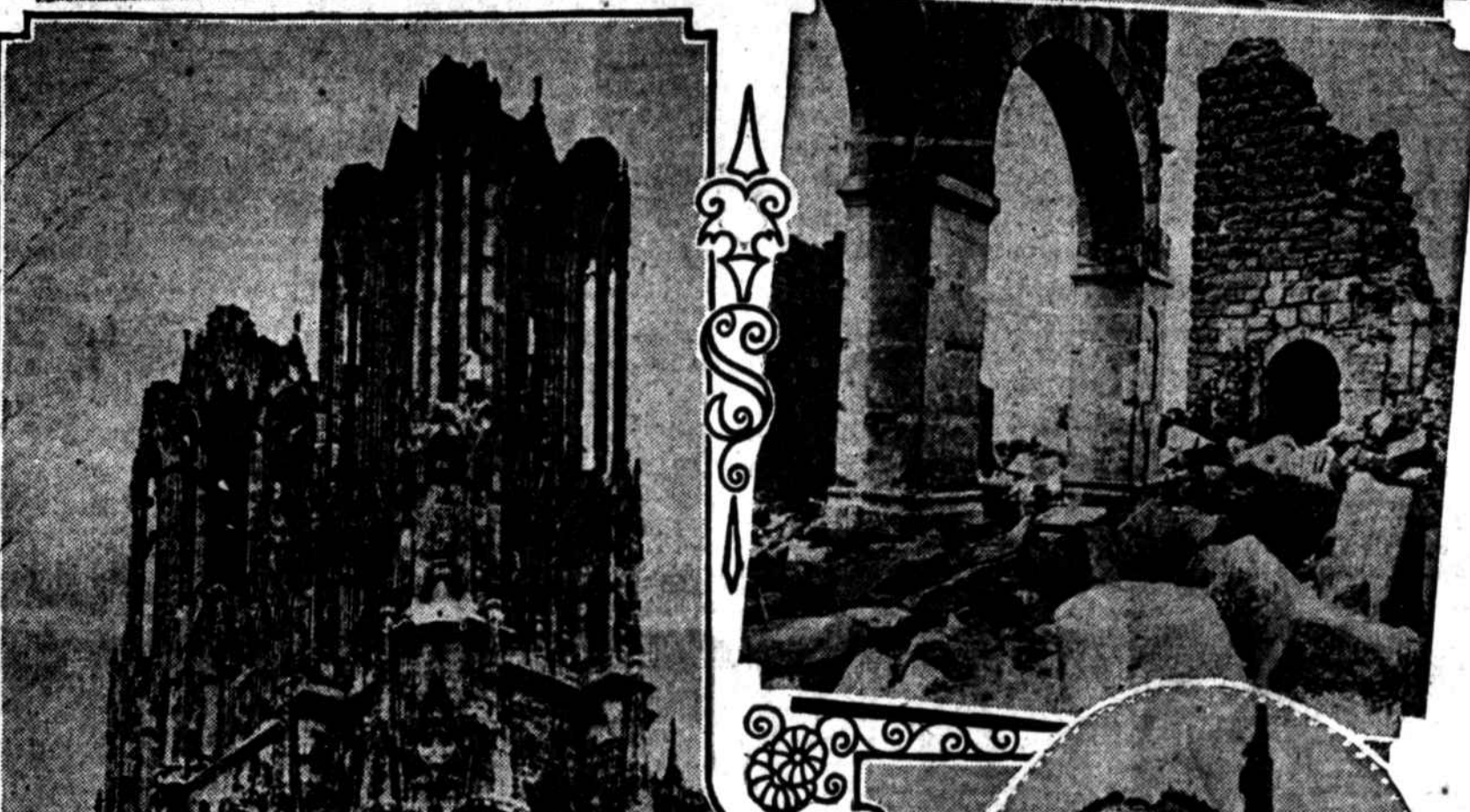
It was the original intention the only victorious French army should ever pass through the gateway, but in 1871 the German insisted upon driving through with their conquering army, though the French had grouped the school children of France under an arch in the belief that it would restrain their enemies from doing so.

Mothers Shed Tears

Next day the Berlin newspaper gloated over the welcome they said the school children of France had given their army. Here today, by the Seine, is the unknown French soldier's memorial, simple and plain, merely a stone in the driveway, while beside it stand men with bared heads, and mothers of other countries who shed a sympathetic tear.

Another grand attraction in Paris at present is the immense war panorama in the new Pantheon de la Guerre, not very far from des Invalides and the Tomb of Napoleon. This great painting, on a circular canvas, pictures the leaders of France and her allies, welcoming home the victorious armies of France. Behind the different groups stretches the map of France, with green fields and old cities and towns,

Ruins of the Great War as pictured in photographs just sent from France by Victor Flambeau. The large photograph of The Cathedral at Rheims shows the destruction wrought by German artillery. Marshal Petain street in Chateau Thierry (upper right) and ruins of Fort de la Pompelle (upper left). The two pictures below were taken in Brimont. The views shown in bottom row were snapped in Brasles showing interior of wrecked church and the City Hall Square.



aviators, from several directions. The portraits here are no doubt excellent, as completed from the preliminary sketches, and the figures and horses are almost too lifelike.

The American portraits are not so good as the others, having been made possibly from photographs, though it is extraordinary to see how splendid is the conception of the French artists in their effort to express the character of our country.

Return to Standby

President Wilson, of course, is a central figure, with former President Taft also very prominent. Colonel Roosevelt is urging on a group of Rough Riders, while the French Ambassador, M. Jusserand, is diplomatically present in the large group.

In the British division the portrait faces are much better works, and every other ally of France, like Belgian, Italy and China and Japan, with Russia, is included in the same way, by a characteristic composition. Many people come repeatedly to study the great war panorama in order to recognize more and more of the noble figures among the vast concourse. In the distance bombs are bursting and ruined French cities are in flames. The map effect is wonderfully sustained with pictorial qualities.

After viewing the vast canvas from the raised platform in the center, one may go by a stairway to a lower floor and see the picture even closer, yet the effect of reality remains the same, and it is difficult to understand that only a flat surface is before one, for the foreground and distances are so perfect in perspective.

Soon this great canvas, so we are told, is coming across the water on a tour of the United States, and then all our friends may enjoy a view of it. It is the intention to send it, not only to America, but through other countries as well, that it may strengthen the bonds of friendship with France.

And now, on a fair, cool morning, void the Flambeau party en route to Rheims, Chateau Thierry and Belleau Wood—battlefields of France! Much of the way the railroad skirts the Marne river, narrow but deep, and twenty-five miles from Paris, or forty kilometres, lies Meux, where the first battle of the Marne was fought in 1914, when the Germans came so near Paris that German cavalry patrols had actually arrived within eight miles of the city.

At Chateau Thierry

At Chateau Thierry the Flambeau group debark, glimpsing on the heights above the last remains of the old chateau walls which give the name from the castle built by Charles Martel as a prison for King Thierry II, whose descendants by a strange coincidence inherited their ancestor's prison and became the rulers of the feudal town. Later on, Charles VII and Jeanne d'Arc at one time occupied the chateau, and many other historic personages are associated with the place.

About May 31, 1918, the Germans invaded Chateau Thierry and sacked the town, appropriating all the valuables, which they had already packed and labeled for transmission to their own country, before they were stopped and defeated, as all the world now knows, by the splendid stand made by American soldiers, as yet untired in war. It was then that the morale of the German army was broken, for it was seen what formidable enemies the American boys would prove, and the great German retreat began, which continued through July and until the armistice.

Look at the rebuilt bridge, only some two or three rods long, where Captain Bissell and his men, fourteen in all, made their brave stand, only seven of them returning after the bridge had been blown up. Here the final German advance was checked, and the shattered houses of the little village of Chateau Thierry (which formerly had 12,000 inhabitants, still tell their mute story.

Now by flying French motor cars, one of them driven by an American, a former soldier, Charles W. Anderson, from Boston, who has married a French wife but will return with her to the States next year, come with us to Belleau Wood, the American cemetery,

which is to be an American National Park of fifty acres.

The Ford cars take the lead over the French, and we pause at Vaux, a little hamlet with every house shattered. New buildings are rapidly going up here, but still the hollow walls of ruined homes stand ghastly by the road on every side. It was at Vaux and the next small town, Boursches, that the American troops made the first advance, opposing the pick of the German armies, the Crown Prince's troops, who had been chosen for the honor of first entry into Paris. In itself, it may not have been so great a victory as many others of the war among the Allies, but its far-reaching effect upon the morale cannot be overestimated.

Back to Ruins

One by one, or two by two, the natives of these little villages creep back to their old homes, all in ruins. It is hard to uproot the Frenchman, for the French love their soil, and seldom migrate, as the comparatively small number in the United States prove, though they more often go to their own colonies, Morocco and Algiers.

Now, in this tiny center, the villagers, solemn-faced and sad, go about their daily tasks, patiently rebuilding their houses, and praying God that war may never come again.

An old woman approaches the visitors, and politely invited them to subscribe, not for a benefit for their broken fortunes, their soldier dead, their ruined daughters, their wounded boys—No! but for a fountain to adorn the new village, which shall arise out of the ashes of the past. A fountain!

And how gladly the Flambeau party make up their little purse for the good project, hoping that some worthy artist may receive the commission, and the monument become a beautiful memorial, giving daily spiritual joy.

It was the Second Division of the American army which fought here from Vaux to Boursches July 2-8, 1918, and at Belleau Wood our Marines achieved their fame. And now we are at the Alsine-Marne American Cemetery and 1,700 wooden crosses mark the burial place of as many American soldiers, many, alas! labeled "Unknown American Soldier."

The spot is an attractive one, and pervaded by such a sense of peace today that one can scarcely realize what occurred here only four years ago. Flowers, roses, and lilies grow in profusion, cultivated, and running wild over the fields and the hill above are hundreds of native blossoms, clover red and white, scarlet poppies, pink heather, purple lupins, blue cornflowers, thistles, and many others of unknown name.

Message in Blood

Climb the hill of Belleau Wood today and see if you can find a relic of the fray. Scarcely a souvenir is to be discovered, but the broken trees indicate the tremendous gun fire here, and a few trenches and burrows like large fox or rabbit holes remain, while here on a stone one may still discern a white cross in a circle, the carving of some soldier with an art sense. And just beyond, a ghastly relic, a serial number in figures of blood, still faintly marked upon the white stone, 21,480, the final message of some wounded American boy.

The Germans occupied this hill, and it was the task of the American Marines to wrench it from them, to take possession of this commanding knoll bristling with machine guns. The Americans were slow to learn the scouting method necessary in skirmishing, for they preferred to rush bravely forward in the face of certain death, but the lesson had to be gained, and sometimes they were twenty-four hours in getting up this hill, advancing little by little from cover to cover under the scant shrubbery.

The Germans learned to fear the American fists, for this was one way in which no other soldier was prepared to fight as did the American, often when he had lost his gun.

Our guide over the battlefields, an American soldier from New York, Gilbert Meredith, who was first with the French and wears the Croix de Guerre, stated that in his experience he never found a German chained to his machine gun as was reported to have been the custom. Meredith looks you straight in the eye, and his own honest blue eyes with a twinkle of humor inspire great confidence.

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